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## The effects of Fordyce's happiness training on decreasing depression among elderly women

Zahra Kashani Nassab <sup>a \*</sup>, Khalil Allahvirdiyani <sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup> Islamic Azad University Tehran-Olom Tahghighat Branch, Tehran, Iran<sup>b</sup> Allameh Tabataba'i University, Dehkade Olympic, Tehran, Iran

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### Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of Fordyce's Happiness Training on decreasing depression among elderly women in Tehran. For this reason, elderly women who came to the Salamat House in region 12 of Tehran were chosen and tested by Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), 30 elderly women were selected and placed randomly to experimental and control groups. Then experimental group was given 8 sessions Fordyce's happiness training. The research design was pre-test and post-test with control group. In order to analyze the data, covariance and independent T tests were used. The results show that: The rate of depression in the group that had been taught Fordyce's happiness is significantly less than those that had not been in sessions. It is possible to suggest that train this program to coaches who work at social services or nursing home.

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### 1- Introduction

Depression is the most prevalent mental disorder which has been recently developed. Depression disorder, due to its high prevalence and frequency among the patients visiting psychiatrists, is called psychiatric cold (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003). At the moment, depression is considered the fourth widespread disease in the world, and according to the announced statistics by the World Health Organization (WHO), 340 million people suffer from depression worldwide. According to the made estimates, until 2020, this disease will become the second widespread disease in the world (Amiri Baramkouhi, 2009). Depression is an emotional reflection and some people experience it at old age. About 12 to 16% of the elderly are affected by depression, while 20 to 30 percent of them at times show signs of depression (Pourebrahim and coworker, 2008). Ratio of women's affection by depression to men's affection by this disease is 2 to 1 which means women compared to men suffer more from depression. Undoubtedly, depression is considered as women's real problem. Women get depressed because in housekeeping or their job are not got paid well, or due to having under-age children are deprived from other people's company. In contrast, when they enjoy higher social positions and higher education, they suffer less from depression (Freedman & Bel, 2005). Importance of happiness study is to the extent that some researchers and theoreticians including Selligman (1999) argue that it is better to focus on happiness in place of depression. This interest has encouraged various researchers while defining

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Corresponding author name: \* Khalil Allahvirdiyani, tel: +989149180198

Email: ka6667@gmail.com

happiness to carry out some investigations on its determinants (Dolgin et al, 2005). Sharp (2004) is one of the theoreticians of happiness psychology who after numerous studies has provided a collection titled "A Program to Increase Personal Happiness" which is a combination of cognitive and behavioral theories. In addition, he maintains that various factors including genetic, personality, income level, social and economic status, education, etc. affect the personal happiness degree. This indicates that there are specific characteristics the presence of which according to the evidence causes happiness. Although there is less research on happiness education and most of the studies have been focused on the relationship of happiness with other variables, many studies indicate that happiness is a variable of influence on human's personality. In a research titled "Effectiveness of Fordyce's Cognitive-Behavioral Training on Happiness, Anxiety, Depression and Social Relationship of Students at Esfahan University", Kazdin (2001) performed Fordyce Happiness Program on groups of 10, 20 and 70 students, and concluded that by this program students' happiness can be enhanced. Performance of this program, in addition to increase of happiness, has been accompanied with decrease of anxiety and depression as well. In study on the effect Fordyce Cognitive-Behavioral Model on reduction of the educational counselors' job fatigue (burnout), Abedi (2002) demonstrated that Fordyce's Happiness Program in addition to increase of happiness can reduce people's job fatigue.

## **2- Methodology**

The under study population included 74 women of 58 years and above visiting the Health Center in Zone 12 of Tehran over the year 2010. In this research, simple random sampling method was used. First, the Beck's Depression Questionnaire was performed on all the visiting women. The women whose depression degree were slight to average (10 to 18%) were specified. From among them 30 persons were randomly selected and divided into 2 groups of 15 people. By drawing lot one group as the examinee was subjected to group training of Fordyce Happiness Model, and another group was considered as the witness group. The witness group did not receive any consultation or training. The research was of semi-experimental design with examinee and witness group in which the researcher by creating a situation with specific conditions (i.e. Fordyce Happiness Group Training) investigates the effect of this approach on reduction of depression among the elderly people within the city of Tehran. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. In the descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, variance, diagram, etc, and in the inferential statistics, covariance, and differential t-test were employed.

## **3- Results**

Associated with positive emotion, negative emotion, depression and happiness and neuroticism is significantly associated with positive emotion, negative emotion, depression, and happiness to a similar ratio. Self-dignity and relationship with parents has a direct predicting power regarding happiness and is inversely related to depression, whereas extroversion and neuroticism predicted the mediatory happiness and depression of self-dignity. Bandura (1994) carried out a research with a sample of 780 persons aging 65 to 80 years selected from the American elderly who lived in the nursing home. The results of this research indicated that happiness is related to higher understanding power, more participation in group activities in institutes and society, and having flexible programs. In the results of these researches, happiness significance is emphasized and it is indicated that happiness is a variable which affects human's personality. What differs in this research is that despite the old age of the examinees suffering from depression, they voluntarily attended the training sessions and the reason for this effectiveness may be the very motivation. By happiness training individual's position does not change but his view to the life and all what exists around him do change, and his beliefs and perception of life issues are affected so as he gets interested in aspects which are right in contrast to depression. Given the effectiveness of Fordyce happiness approach in reducing elderly people's depression, it is therefore recommended this approach to be taught to coaches of nursing houses,

cultural centers, and the places providing social services in order to play an effective role in reducing the elderly people's depression.

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